# PROPAGANDA IN HISTORY

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# Propaganda In History.

During the World War we heard a great deal of propaganda, and the word was used generally in a bad sense. But there is really nothing harmful in the word itself. It signifies only a means of publicity, which, when applied properly and legitimately serves a very good purpose. The Germans applied it improperly. They sent to this country millions of dollars to buy up newspapers and newspaper men to abuse the allies and make palatable their own conduct, too often brutal in the extreme. Propaganda is a form of advertisement, and it is only when advertisements are resorted to for the purpose of spreading erroneous conceptions that they are to be condemned. Quack advertisements are at all time pernicious.

A feature especially popular in this country is propaganda applied to history. This consists in using striking characters and events of the past to give importance to present matters. As long as the truth is told much good must result, for the past contains vast archives of experience, from which valuable information may be had. The reverse happens when to give prominence to particular ends, historical matter is exploited at the expense of truth.

These thoughts are suggested by what is so often read in the newspapers and periodicals of the North and even in books which have a more serious character. By sheer dint of assertion, taken up and published as if by concerted arrangement, certain things are given a character that never did belong to them. The idea seems to be with many who are active in the matter that the real truth makes no difference provided the multitude can be got to accept a certain view. This is the very essence of German propagandism, so much feared and condemned during the World War. But this is not true of all, for there are some who appear to be swept along by a force which they are powerless to resist.

Let me cite some of the cases which have been made the subject of this kind of exploitation.

1. There is a manifest disposition to place Plymouth before Jamestown. It is an old story and goes back a hundred and fifty years to the historian Hutchinson, who asserted in his history of Massachusetts that the Virginia colony had virtually failed and

that the Pilgrim colony was the means of reviving it. How far from the truth Hutchison strayed in his statement is shown by Bradford's contemporary narrative "The Plymouth Plantation," which proves very clearly that it was the successful establishment of the Virginia colony that induced the Puritans to leave Holland for America, in preference to some Dutch plantation like Guiana. Sir Edwyn Sandys was the patron as well of the Puritan colony as of the Virginia colony. They sailed under a patent of the Virginia Company of London granted through his auspices, and when by miscalculation they landed outside of the dominion of the Virginia Company the compact adopted by them in the cabin of the *Mayflower* followed the terms of the original patent. It was, indeed, owing to the Jamestown Colony that landing was at all possible. Six years before, Sir Thomas Gates had sent Argall from Jamestown, who had driven the French from their settlements in Nova Scotia and on the coast of Maine, and thus prevented them from occupying the coast of Massachusetts as they were about to do.

So far from the truth was Hutchinson's statement that in 1620 the Virginia colony had virtually failed, that even after the massacre of 1622 Virginia had over nine hundred colonists, and the Plymouth colony but one hundred and fifty, and these, according to Bradford, were in a starving condition from which they were rescued by a ship of Capt. John Huddleston, a member of the Virginia colony. In 1629 when the Plymouth colony had 300 inhabitants, the Jamestown colony had 3,000.

But recent writers do not even admit the reservation of Hutchinson of a prior though vanishing Jamestown. That ancient settlement, with all that it stands for, is actually to be snubbed out of recognition, and the claim is now boldly advanced that the Plymouth settlement was the *first c*olony and all Americans the *virtual output* of that plantation. Jamestown is not to be allowed even a share in the upbuilding of America. Can anything be more astonishing, and where is the "New England conscience" that it does not revolt against this perversion of the truth?

Among the many recent instances of this historic prevarication which have fallen under my notice, reference may be made to the columns of the *Saturday Evening Post for February* 7, 1920, to the *World's Work* for November, 1919, and to Mr. James M. Beck's

book, "The War and Humanity," published by G. P. Putnam's Sons in 1917. No plea of ignorance can be advanced for these writers, and, on the other hand, it is impossible to believe that they deliberately falsified. They come under the class of propaganda victims rather than propaganda sinners. They were swept on against their own better knowledge by the spirit of propagandism so deadly to the very existence of truth.

As to the first of these, the article in the *Saturday Evening Post,* the person who composed the editorial entitled "Sanctuary," uses the following words:

"Two ships, the Mayflower and the Buford mark epochs in the history of America. The Mayflower brought the first of the builders to this country, the Buford has taken away the first destroyer."

We learn from the *Richmond News Leader* for March 1, 1920, that Mrs. Elizabeth Henry Lyons, the historian general of the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of Virginia, wrote a protest against this statement and received a reply virtually admitting that the editors knew differently when they made it. Their words were that in "a strict sense" Mrs. Lyons was "historically correct," but that "they did not believe in this narrow sense our editorial is likely to be misleading even to school boys, who are thoroughly familiar with these dates in American history." The dates referred to were 1607, when the *Sarah Constant* and her two companion ships brought the real founders of the nation to Jamestown, and 1620, when the *Mayflower* brought the Puritans to Plymouth in Massachusetts.

There is a hint here that in a *broad sense* the article in the paper was correct, but on this point the learned editors did not enlighten Mrs. Lyons. There is no broader word than error and no narrower word than truth. It is the Good Book which says: "Enter ye by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction."

The plain truth is that neither in its origin nor in the institutions established in New England did the Plymouth Colony lay the foundations of the American Commonwealth. It was antedated by Jamestown and the Jamestown Assembly. The 41 signers of the Mayflower Compact did not form a democracy but an aristocracy and only cautiously admitted any newcomers into partner-

ship with them. After twenty years less than forty per cent. of the people at Plymouth had any share in the government (Palfrey, *New England,* II, 8). And as the years rolled by the range of power became more and more restricted till it resembled the system prevailing in Massachusetts, into which Plymouth and its associated towns were eventually absorbed in 1691.

And how was it in Massachusetts, which set the example not only for Plymouth, but for all the other New England colonies, even Rhode Island in the end. To say that the government there from its inception was an aristocracy is putting it mild. It was a tyranny of the sternest type whose equal in history can scarcely be found anywhere.

American institutions of today are democratic, and are tested by the law of reason and nature. On the contrary, in New England the suffrage was confined during the seventeenth century to a few favored members of the Congregational Church, and everything was tested by the stern decrees of the Old Testament. In Massachusetts the law divided the people into "the better class," "those above the ordinary degree," and "those of mean condition." Though there were annual elections the magistrates had no difficulty in retaining office for life through the law of preference, which universally prevailed, and the town meetings were little oligarchies governed by the minister and a select clique.[1] So the Rev. Mr. Stone aptly described Massachusetts of the seventeenth century "as a speaking aristocracy in the face of a silent democracy."

Though the Charter of King William, in 1691, introduced several very important reforms in Massachusetts, and his firm hand in suppressing tyranny in all the other New England colonies was strongly felt, the essential principles of the Puritan governments remained the same. To the very end of the colonial days the distinctions in society were observed with such punctilious nicety that the students at Harvard and Yale were arranged according to the dignity of their birth and rank, and the ballot was very limited. Weeden in his *Social and Economical History of New England* sums up the character of the New England institutions in the words that "they were democratic in form, but aristocratic in the

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[1]For the working of the ballot in New England, see Baldwin in *American Historical Papers*, IV, p 81.

substance of the administration." By no stretch of the imagination," says Dr. Charles M. Andrews, Professor of History in Yale University, "can the political conditions in any of the New England colonies be called popular or democratic. Government was in the hands of a very few men." And even today some of the worst inequalities in elections prevail in the New England States.[2]

On the other hand, Virginia, where the first colony was planted, which afforded inspiration to all the rest, appealed from the first to the law of nature and of reason, which constitutes the very essence of the democratic principle. She had the first English institutions, as shown in the first jury trial, the first popular elections, and the first representative body of law makers, and, before any Puritan foot had planted itself upon Plymouth Rock, courts for the administration of justice and for the recordation of deeds, mortgages and wills, were established facts. Instead of resting on church membership as in Massachusetts, the House of Burgesses, which was the great controlling body in Virginia, rested for more than a hundred years upon universal suffrage. There was, it is true, an apparent change in 1670 when the possession of a freehold was made the condition of voting, but it was not a real change, since the law did not define the extent of the freehold until as late as 1736; and even under the law of 1736, as shown by Dr. J. F. Jameson,[3] many more people voted in Virginia down to the American Revolution than did in Massachusetts. There was a splendid and spectacular body of aristocrats in colonial Virginia, but they did not have anything like the political power and prestige of the New England preachers and magistrates.

That popular institutions were a dominating feature in Virginia is the evidence of Alexander Spotswood, who writing, in 1713, declared[4] that the Assembly which met that year was composed of representatives of the plain people; of Governor Robert Dinwiddie, who, in 1754, complained[5] of the House of Burgesses for their "constant encroachment on the prerogatives of the Crown"

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[2]Jones, *The Rotten Boroughs of New England* in *North American Review*, CXCVII, p. 486.

[3]New York *Nation*, April 27, 1893.

[4]*Letters of Alexander Spotswood*, II, p. 1.

[5]*The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, I, p. 100.

and "their Republican ways of thinking;" of Rev. Andrew Burnaby, an English traveler, who, in 1759, wrote of the public or political character of the Virginians, as haughty and impatient of restraint, and "scarcely able to bear the thought of being controlled by any superior power;" of Col. Landon Carter, of "Sabine Hall, "who attributed[6] his own defeat, in 1765, to his unpopularity with the common voters, who were jealous of any aristocratic pretentions; of J. F. D. Smythe, another British traveler before the American Revolution, who spoke of the haughtiness of the great middle class, who comprised half of the population; of Edmund Randolph, who referring to the same period described[7] the aristocracy of Virginia as "little and feeble, and incapable of daring to assert any privilege clashing with the rights of the people at large;" of Colonel St. George Tucker, who denied[8] that there was such a thing as "dependence of classes" in Virginia, and declared that the aristocracy of Virginia was as "harmless a set of men as ever existed;" and finally Thomas Jefferson, who, in 1814, writing[9] to John Adams, while referring to the traditionary reverence paid to certain families in Massachusetts and Connecticut, "which had rendered the officers of those governments nearly hereditary in those families," derided the power of the aristocracy in Virginia both before and after the Revolution.

If, indeed, there was any doubt where popular institutions had the stronger hold, the doubt is removed when we notice what happened when the two communities for the first time had the opportunity of directing without foreign restraint, the government of their own country. Soon after independence was secured, Virginia became the headquarters of the Democratic-Republican Party—the party of popular ideas—and New England became the headquarters of the Federalist Party—the party of aristocratic ideas. Real democracy was brought to New England for the first time in 1804, when Thomas Jefferson carried all the New England

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[6] *William and Mary Quarterly*, XVI, 259.
[7] Henry, *Patrick Henry*, I, 209.
[8] *William and Mary College Quarterly*, XXII, 252.
[9] *Ibid.*, XXIII, 227.

States but Connecticut. It was not fully accepted till 1816 when the Federalist Party passed finally out of existence.

In the work of making a constitution for the new government and of organizing it, Virginia, as John Fiske says, furnished "four out of the five constructive statesmen engaged"—Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Marshall. Not one of them was of Puritan stock. The fifth was Alexander Hamilton, a native of the West Indies and a New Yorker by adoption. In the matter of extending our territories it was the cavalier, George Rogers Clark, that conquered the Northwest Territory, now represented by five great States. And Louisiana, Florida, Texas, California, New Mexico and all the West were added to the Union by Virginian and Southern Presidents, thus trebling the area of the Republic and making it a continental power. Had the Puritan influence, which opposed these annexations of territory, prevailed, the United States would be confined to-day to a narrow strip along the Atlantic Coast.

As a matter of fact, the rightful name of the Republic is the historic name of *Virginia* (first given by the greatest of English queens and accepted by the Pilgrim Fathers in the *Mayflower* compact). "United States of America," are merely words of description. They are not a name.

Now as to the writer in the *World's Work*. This is no less a person than William Sowden Sims, an admiral in the United States Navy. In an article, entitled "The Return of the *Mayflower*," he describes how Great Britain welcomed our navy at the outset of our participation in the war with a moving picture film which depicted how in 1620 a few Englishmen had landed in North America and laid the foundations of a new state, based on English conceptions of justice and liberty, how out of the disjointed colonies they had founded one of the mightiest nations of history, and how when the liberties of mankind were endangered, the descendants of the "old *Mayflower* pioneers" had in their turn crossed the ocean—this time going eastward to fight for the traditions of the race. Admiral Sims makes this comment:

"The whole story appealed to the British masses as one of the great miracles of history—a single miserable little settlement in Massachusetts Bay expanding into a continent overflowing with resources and wealth—a shipload of men, women and children

developing in three centuries into a nation of more than 100,000,000 people. And the arrival of our destroyers, pictured on the film, informed the British people that all this youth and energy had been thrown upon their side of the battle."

Not a hint of Jamestown, not a word of tribute to the men, who, in the early days before Plymouth Rock, laid down their lives by thousands that this great continent might be saved from French and Spanish dominion and Plymouth itself might exist.

Nothing more aptly describes the effect of this propagandist program than its acceptance and exploitation in England through the moving picture film described by Admiral Sims. The English managers cared nothing between Jamestown and Plymouth, but were bent from their natural regard for truth, by the wish to please the present dominant influence in America, which they correctly located northward.

Finally, as to Mr. Beck, in his book, entitled "The War and Humanity," which Theodore Roosevelt endorsed with a "Foreword," no one can doubt that he knew better when he wrote the words which follow. They were part of an address delivered by him in 1916 at a luncheon, given to him in London by the Pilgrim Society of that city, when Viscount Brice and other eminent Englishmen were present. And yet he must not be judged too harshly. Like Admiral Sims, he was the helpless victim of propaganda. Mr. Beck said:

"Never was a nation more dominated by a tradition than the United States by the tradition of its political isolation. It has its root in the very beginning of the American Commonwealth. In nine generations no political party and a few public men have ever questioned its continued efficacy. The pioneers who came in 1620 across the Atlantic to Plymouth Rock and founded the American Commonwealth desired like the intrepid Kent in King Lear 'to shape their old course in a country new,' so that the spirit of detachment from Europe was emplanted in the very souls of the pioneers who conquered the virgin forests of America."

Mark what Mr. Beck said: "The pioneers who came in 1620 across the Atlantic to Plymouth Rock and founded the American Commonwealth." Not a word of the men who came in the *Sarah Constant,* the *Goodspeed* and the *Discoverey,* and prepared the way at Jamestown for all future colonization of America.

2. The second myth which has been extensively circulated is that the Plymouth settlers came to America for religious freedom. As a matter of fact, they left England for Holland because they were persecuted, and they left Holland for America, not because they were persecuted by the Dutch, but, as Bradford narrates, because they were in danger of being absorbed in the body of the Dutch nation by natural causes. Charles M. Andrews, in a recent work, declares that with the single exception of giving to New England the congregational form of worship, these humble and simple settlers were "without importance in the world of thought, literature or education."

The settlers who came with John Winthrop in 1630 were the real builders of Massachusetts, which for a century and a half was the enemy of free thought. The persecuted in England turned persecutors in America, and the colonial disputes with England turned upon the religious and political tyranny which the Puritans erected in New England. Far from religious convictions being the only driving force that sent hundreds of men to New England, hardly a fifth of the people in Massachusetts were professed Christians; and yet it was this fifth that had the power and taxed and persecuted all the rest. The liberty they wanted from England was the liberty to harass the majority of the population which did not agree with them. Seen at this distance of time England showed a marvel of patience in dealing with the people of Massachusetts in the 17th century. And yet there is not an instance of severity which has not had its respectable defenders, and Charles Francis Adams, Jr., in his "Massachusetts—Its Historians and Its History," takes notice of how these apologists have in their histories "struggled" and "squirmed" and "shuffled" in the face of the record.

3. The third myth of which I shall take notice is one strangely endorsed by Charles Francis Adams himself in the same book. He makes the remarkable statement that the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, written by his great-grandfather, John Adams, first fixed the principles of the American written constitution, and pioneered the way to the Federal Constitution of eight years later. This assertion has been taken up and repeated by many persons since, till it is becoming rapidly accepted as a fact by the writing and reading public of the North. As in the case of James-

town, George Mason and the Virginia Constitution of 1776 are ignored and made to suffer from a propaganda of untruth.

4. Not to mention numerous other subjects of propagandism, there is the Lincoln myth. Hardly a single paper published north of Mason and Dixon's line can be taken up without the reader seeing something about this wonderful hero of the North. We all know that the North started out with making a hero of John Brown, but abandoned him for the much more desirable character of Mr. Lincoln. His assassination gave propagandists a good starting point, and since then never has propaganda been more active. Washington is even relegated to the background, and a highly worthy and eminent historian, Dr. Albert Bushnell Hart, calls Lincoln "The First American." The ideality given him is chiefly based upon a great fabrication sedulously taught and inculated that Lincoln fought the South for the abolition of slavery of the negroes. This was denied to the very last by Lincoln himself, but is exploited in the recently published play of Mr. Drinkwater, an Englishman, as it has been by hundreds of other writers.

The mischievousness of this Lincoln propaganda idea was exhibited recently to the full by Rev. Charles Francis Potter, pastor of the Lenox Avenue Unitarian Church, New York, in an address delivered on March 7, 1920, at Earl Hall, Columbia University, and reported in the "Sun and New York Herald." This gentleman characterizes Lincoln as the "future social Christ" of America, and prophesied the coming of an "American Church" and an "American Bible," in which people "will find in parallel columns the stories of Christ and of Lincoln."

Absurd and blasphemous as this hysterical prophecy may appear to some, it may, nevertheless, come true. What the Roman Senate achieved by decree in the case of their emperors, may in this day be more certainly accomplished by money and propaganda. When the most elemental facts in the history of the United States are snubbed and ignored, as in the case of Jamestown, it is not at all surprising that the character of Lincoln is so represented by the Northern press that the true Lincoln is no longer recognizable. Everything in any way tending to lessen his importance is studiously kept in the background.

The writer certainly has no wish to detract from Lincoln's real merits. That he was a man of ability and originality can

scarcely be questioned, but his intellectuality was not of that degree to place him in the same class with Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton, Marshall, Madison, Calhoun, Clay and Webster These men attracted the public attention from their early manhood, and profoundly influenced the country throughout their lives. But Lincoln was practically an unknown factor till his nomination as President in 1861, and his influence was confined to the four years of the war. There can be no doubt that his assassination was a fortunate thing for his fame.

Nor does Lincoln appear naturally as venomous as many of his party. It is doubtless true that he would have preferred mild measures instead of severe ones. But this is as much as can be said, and to accomplish success he had no compunction or scruples whatever.

Let us consider the claims of Lincoln to the ideal character in history which has been imputed to him.

It is impossible to associate idealism with coarseness, and Lincoln, judged by every test of historic evidence, was a very coarse man. There is no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of his friend and admirer, Ward H. Lamon, who declared that "in his tendency to tell stories of the grosser sort, Lincoln was restrained by no presence and no occasion." Herndon, who was his law partner, says that "he loved a story, however extravagant or vulgar, if it had a good point," and Don Piatt declares that he managed to live through the cares and responsibilities of the war only by reason of his coarse mold. After his election Piatt saw much of Lincoln, who told stories, "no one of which will bear printing," and Hugh McCulloch tells of "the very funny stories" of Mr. Lincoln during the war, after hearing of Sheridan's victory in the Valley of Virginia—stories, he says, "which would not be listened to with pleasure by very refined ears." And General McClellan said "his stories were seldom refined."

Indeed, what kind of an ideal man is he who could open a Cabinet meeting called to discuss the Emancipation proclamation with reading foolish things from Artemus Ward, and, when visiting the field of Sharpsburg, freshly soaked with the blood of thousands of brave men, could call for the singing of a ribald song.?[10]

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[10]Don Piatt in Rice, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 486; George Edmunds (Mrs. Minor Meriwether), *Facts and Falsehoods*, 73-90.

Certainly it would never do to put Lincoln's letter[11] to Mrs. Browning on the subject of marriage in a column parallel with the stories of Christ. Its grotesque humor, its coarse suggestions and its base insinuations against the virtue of a lady to whom he had proposed and by whom he had been rejected, are shocking enough without subjecting it to such a test.

Mr. Lincoln's kindness in individual cases and professions of charity in his messages, which have been greatly exploited, by no means prove that he had any exalted sense of humanity. The recognized expression of humanity among nations is the international law, and Lincoln and his government acted repeatedly contrary to it.

How stands history in regard to the claim of humanity? Here is the testimony of the late Charles Francis Adams, a Federal Brigadier General, and President of the Massachusetts Historical Society: "Our own methods during the last stages of the the war was sufficiently described by General Sheridan, when during the Franco-Prussian war, as the guest of Bismarck, he declared against humanity in warfare, contending that the correct policy was to treat a hostile population with the utmost rigor, leaving them, as he expressed it, 'Nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war.'" The doctrine that there must be no humanity in warfare proclaimed by Sheridan was also voiced by Sherman in his letter to General Grant March 9, 1864: "Until we can repopulate Georgia it is useless for us to occupy it, but the utter destruction of its roads, houses and people will cripple their military resources * * * I can make the march and make Georgia howl." General Halleck wanted the site of Charleston, thick with the heroic memories of the Revolution, sowed with salt, and General Grant, in his letters to General David Hunter and General Sheridan, issued orders to make the beautiful Valley of Virginia "a barren waste." Nothing need be said of the ferocious spirit of the lesser tribe of Federal commanders.

And Lincoln, in spite of the fine catchy sentiment of his Gettysburg speech, gave his sanction to the same policy when he said in response to a protest against his employment of negro

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[11]Lamon, *Life of Lincoln*, 1872, p. 181. Nicolay and Hay, *Letters and Speeches of Abraham Lincoln*, I, 17-19.

troops: "No human power can subdue this rebellion without the use of the emancipation policy and every other policy calculated to weaken the moral and physical forces of the rebellion."

Secretary Chase, in his diary, shows that on July 21, 1862, in a Cabinet meeting the President expressed himself as "averse to arming the negroes," but shortly after, on August 3, 1862, the President said on the same question that "he was pretty well cured of any objections to any measure except want of adaptedness to putting down the Rebellion." To the spoliators Hunter, Sheridan and Sherman, he wrote his enthusiastic commendations and not a word of censure.

By an act of Congress, approved July 17, 1862, and published with an approving proclamation by Lincoln, death, imprisonment or confiscation of property were denounced on five million white people in the South and all their abettors and aiders in the North. To reduce the South into submission Lincoln instituted on his own motion a blockade, a means of war so extreme that despite its legality under the International Law, it evoked from the Germans the most savage retaliation when applied to them. He threatened with hanging as pirates Southern privateersmen and as guerillas regularly commissioned partisans. He suspended the cartel of exchange, and when the Federal prisoners necessarily fared badly for lack of food on account of the blockade and the universal devastation, he retorted their sufferings upon the Confederate prisoners—thousands of whom perished of cold and starvation in the midst of plenty. Indeed, he refused to see or hear a committee of Federal prisoners permitted by Mr. Davis to visit Washington in the interest of the suffering prisoners at Andersonville. Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, denounced in Parliament Butler's order against the women of New Orleans as "too indecent to be put in the English language," but Lincoln neither had it rescinded nor rebuked the author of it.[12] And such was his idea of popular government that he gave per-

[12]This order was directed against any "gesture" of a woman expressive of contempt of a Federal soldier, but in the American Revolution the women of Boston appear to have regarded spitting at the British prisoners taken at Saratoga as patriotic. (See Lady Riedesel's *Journal.*)

mission to the tenth part of any of the people of a rebellious State to form a government for the State. Indeed, private relief which even the Germans allowed in the late war to prisoners, was not always permitted by the Northern authorities in the War for Southern Independence. A notable instance of refusal was afforded in December, 1864, when certain ladies of England asked permission to distribute $85,000 among the Confederate prisoners. Mr. Charles Francis Adams, the United States Minister, became humanely the medium of their request, but Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State, made refusal in terms as insulting almost to Mr. Adams as to the charitable ladies concerned. Lincoln had a fine opportunity in this case to show that he meant what he said of "charity" in one of his messages, but he did not interfere.

Medicines were made contraband, and to justify the seizure of neutral goods at sea a great enlargement of the principle of the "ultimate destination" was introduced into the International Law. The property of non-combatants was seized everywhere without compensation, and within the areas embraced by the Union lines, the oath of allegiance was required of both sexes above sixteen years of age under penalty of being driven from their homes. Houses, barns, villages and towns were destroyed in the South, and in the North by the authority of the President thirty-eight thousand persons are said to have been arrested and confined as prioners without trial or formal charge. Even the acts for which Lincoln has been most applauded in recent days—his emancipation proclamation—stands on no really humanitarian ground.

He declared to a committee of clergymen from Chicago that in issuing his emancipation proclamation he would look only to its effect as a war measure, independent of its "legal" or "constitutional" character or of "its moral nature in view of the possible consequences of insurrection or massacre in the Southern States." This declaration, which involved directly the admission that, if he were once convinced that emancipation would contribute to ending the war, he would proclaim it regardless of massacre, is not exactly such as would recommend him as a champion of humanity to the Southern people. Massacre of women and children is a dreadful thing.

When we come to examine Lincoln's statecraft, it appears to indicate a lack of decision utterly at variance with the inordinate

estimate placed upon his abilities by modern propagandists. These people never tire of blaming Mr. Buchanan for not at once using force to suppress the "rebellion," and yet have not a word of censure against Lincoln for allowing a whole month to pass without taking any action. That he declared in his inaugural address that he intended to hold the forts and public property was no more than what Mr. Buchanan had also said, and this declaration was subject to developments. Even James Schouler, in his history, states that "so reticent, indeed, of his plans had been the new President, while sifting opinions through the month, that it seemed as though he had no policy, but was waiting for his Cabinet to frame one for him." Is this the kind of appearance that a President who is expected to lead in matters should assume before the nation?

After the meeting of the Cabinet on March 15, 1861, in which five of the members opposed action, Lincoln's mind more and more tended to the same conclusion. It is idle to say, as many of his panegyrists do, that Lincoln had no knowledge of Seward's assurances to Judge Campbell that the troops would be withdrawn from Fort Sumter. Mr. Schouler is an admirer, but he cannot agree with this view and asks very pertinently why if this was the case, Lincoln should have agreed to give notice of a contrary action.

It appears, indeed, that the policy of giving up Fort Sumter went to the extent of the preparation of an editorial for a New York paper to defend Lincoln,—a copy of which was furnished Gov. Francis Pickens, of South Carolina, "by one very near the most intimate counsels of the President of the United States."[13] But after signing an order for withdrawing the troops, Lincoln reconsidered when the governors of seven of the Northern States, which were under control of the tariff interests, assembled in Washington about the first of April, 1861, and protested against it.

That the final determination turned on the tariff question is not surprising when one considers the obstinacy of the North in adhering to protection in 1833. Only a miracle saved the country at that time from war. On March 16, 1861, Stanton, who had been

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[13]**Francis Pickens' Letter in** *William and Mary College Quarterly*, **XXIV, 78-84.**

a member of Buchanan's Cabinet, wrote to the ex-President that "the Republicans are beginning to think that a monstrous blunder was made in the tariff bill (the Morrill tariff included ranges from 50 to 80 per cent.), that it will cut off the trade of New York, build up New Orleans and the Southern ports and leave the government no revenue." There was a Confederate tariff of from ten to twenty per cent., and Lincoln's fears of it were ultimately excited.

So on April 1, Seward materially changed his attitude by placing in Judge Campbell's hands a written memorandum to the effect that the President might desire to supply Fort Sumter, but would not do so without giving notice. On April 4 Lincoln had an interview with Col. John B. Baldwin, who came from the Virginia Convention, and in response to an appeal told him he had come too late, and asked "what would become of his tariff if he allowed those men at Montgomery to open Charleston as a port of entry with their ten per cent. tariff?"[14] That day Lincoln drafted instructions to Major Anderson at Fort Sumter that relief would be sent, and ordered him to hold the fort. Notice was given to Gov. Pickens of South Carolina, but it reached him only as the first part of the relief squadron was leaving New York. This scarcely deserved the ascription of a reasonable or honorable notice.*

The same sort of uncertainty and vacillation hedged about Lincoln's action on Emancipation. He suppressed several measures looking to that end by his generals, and on Sept. 13, 1862, declared that Emancipation was absolutely futile and likened the policy to "the Pope's bull against the comet." He asked: "Would my word free the slaves when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the Rebel States? Is there a single court or magistrate or individual who would be influenced by it there?"[15] And yet on September 23, he decided to do what he had refused to do ten days before. The only circumstance which had happened in the interval was the battle of Sharpsburg, but this certainly did not affect the

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[14]Gordon, *Life of Jefferson Davis*, 124.

*See "Lincoln and Fort Sumter," in Tyler's *Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, II, 211-214.

[15]Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, VIII, 30, 31.

substance of the objections which he had urged on Sept. 13. No court, nor magistrate, nor individual in the South was by that battle put in better mind as to the question. In the North the effect of the proclamation, according to Lincoln himself, looked soberly in the face is not very satisfactory." The Republicans were defeated in the elections which followed, and Mr. Rhodes, the historian, writes that "no one can doubt that it (the proclamation of emancipation) was a contributing force." It is difficult to understand what single fact places Lincoln's action on a higher plane than that of Lord Dunmore during the American Revolution.

Nevrtheless, the propagandists have been successful in disseminating the idea that Lincoln was the great emancipator and that all his shuffling and equivocation was fine evidence of consummate leadership on his part.

The propagandist has in similar manner smoothed away all exceptions affecting the relations of President Lincoln to his Cabinet. And yet such exceptions existed, if any confidence is to be placed in Charles Francis Adams, Sr., who in his "Memorial Address" on Seward represents him as practically subordinate to his Secretary of State. And while Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, repels the charge and claims that the President was the dominating mind, his narrative of the incredible liberties taken by Seward, and the President's indifference to them, till roused by others to a proper sense of his dignity, does not redound much to Lincoln's credit. Welles complains much of the assumptions of Seward, but doubtless forgot his own action in the *Trent* affair, when he publicly approved the conduct of Wilkes, subsequently disavowed by Lincoln. If, indeed, Lincoln did not, on the side, give Welles permission to act as he did, which is very probable, what was this approval but officiousness on Welles' part meriting signal rebuke? And if Welles did write with Lincoln's permission, what was Lincoln's final action in apologizing to Great Britain, but a species of camouflage unworthy a President of the United States.

This deference, if not submission to his secretaries, is said by others to have been even more manifested by Lincoln with Stanton, his Secretary of War, than with Seward, his Secretary of State. John C. Ropes declares that Lincoln and Stanton constantly interfered with military plans greatly to the detriment of military

success, and the history of the Virginia campaigns is a history of official blunders in the appointment by Lincoln of incompetent generals. Charles Francis Adams, Sr., declares in the same "Memorial Address" on Seward that Lincoln was "quite deficient in his acquaintance with the character and qualities of public men or their aptitude for the positions to which he assigned them. Indeed he never selected them solely by that standard." Welles, in his rejoinder, does not deny that such appointments were made, but retorts only by saying they occurred chiefly on the recommendation of Mr. Seward "who was vigilant and tenacious in dispensing the patronage of the State Department." This does not help the case. The very point against Lincoln is that he did not exert his own individuality sufficiently against a lot of impudent secretaries. It is impossible to suppose that any other man, in the whole list of Presidents, would have rested under such vassalage.

Lincoln's weakness of character is aptly illustrated by his course at other times. He never could rise above the idea that the South was fighting for slavery, and though the South resented the suggestion as an insult he more than once proposed to his Cabinet to pay the South for their slaves, if they would return to the Union. But his Cabinet, for quite different reasons, resisted the project, and Lincoln submitted. Indeed, his very last act showed how incapable he was of withstanding the influence of men of superior power like Stanton. On his visit to Richmond, after the evacuation in April, 1865, he authorized the Virginia Legislature to be called together, and yet he had hardly returned to Washington when, succumbing to the vehement protests of Stanton, as Stanton himself says, he recalled the permission, excusing himself on grounds which are plainly matter of afterthought.[16]

Much important detail is furnished by Dr. Clifton B. Hall towards enabling us to judge of Lincoln's character in his recent life of "Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of Tennessee." The object of the appointment was the restoration of Tennessee to the Union, but Lincoln, despite his professions of "charity," instead of selecting a cool, conservative person for the position, took Andrew Johnson—a man whom Dr. Hall describes as one of the most

[16]Connor, *Life of John A. Campbell*, 174-198.

venomous and hated men in Tennessee. He not only took him, but stood by him, and condoned all his violence, which got him into fierce quarrels with all the Federal generals at any time in Tennessee. That Andrew Johnson was in large degree a demagogue, as Dr. Hall states, is undoubtedly true, and yet he had certain qualities, which exhibited under other conditions, command our admiration and esteem. No one can tell how far Lincoln would have allowed the radicals to go after the war in their reconstruction of the South. His action referred to in regard to the Virginia Legislature is not particularly encouraging, but Johnson's conduct is a matter of history. However violent he was, while the war was going on, and for a year later, he proved himself incapable of the meanness of continuing to persecute a defenseless and conquered people; and asserting his authority as President, as any self-respecting man would have done, he turned the truculent Stanton out of office, thereby risking expulsion from his own high position at the hands of a crazy and malignant Congress.

In prosecuting the war Lincoln appealed to a great idea—the Union—which he declared was his *sole* idea in prosecuting the war, but the old Union was founded on consent and the Union he had in mind was one of force. His war, therefore, was contrary to the principles of self-government expressed in the Declaration of Independence and to the modern principle of self-determination, now the accepted doctrine of the world—a doctrine not only endorsed by the present President of the United States, but by both houses of Congress. In recent years, we have seen Norway and Sweden separate in peace, and much of Europe was reconstructed on new national lines.

The truth is, there never was a war more inconsistent in principle than that waged against the Southern States in 1861. Besides the great territory which it occupied the Southern Government placed in the field armies as vast as Napoleon's, and for four years waged a war on equal terms with the great and populous North, aided by recruits from Europe and enlistments from the South's own population. Indeed, we have Lincoln's own statement that without the aid of the Southern negro troops he would have had "to abandon the war in three weeks."[17] As a matter

[17] *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, X, 190.

of fact the old Union consisted from the first of two nations which had been brought together by British taxation, and the South's fight for independence was only in obedience to the logic of the real facts.

The present Southerners are glad to be free of slavery and are loyal citizens of the Union, but this is far from saying that they approve the violent methods by which slavery was abolished and the Union restored.

In conclusion of this article on propaganda, I may cite a few sentences from Robert Quillen in the *Saturday Evening Post* for January 24, 1920, which the editors might have taken to heart when preparing their editorial about Plymouth Rock.

"Since the purpose of propaganda is to present one side of a case, it is from its very inception a distortion of facts, and an avoidance of the whole truth. * * * Truth lies at the bottom of a well and we are poisoning the well. * * * Propaganda has made doubters of us all."

Was the divine Pocahontas after all correct, when in her interview with John Smith in England in 1616 she characterized the white race as hopeless liars?

The exact language of Pocahontas was: "Your countrymen will lie much."

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